

An Excerpt from “The God of Reason”

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Thus, the relevance of good or evil in terms of human survival is another example of the paradox of limited human reasoning in face of a larger context than can be fully accommodated. Any idiot can tell you that preserving the natural environment is good for the species. But arguing the point rationally against anyone who has an interest in degrading it in service of their individual survival perspective is difficult even for the most intelligent among us. This difficulty is a result of two opposing survival imperatives in play within the same individual organism. One is the individual survival imperative, and the other is the species' survival imperative. The power of reason, being far more about local relevance than the wider context, tends to over-serve the local, finite survival needs of the individual or tribe, often to the detriment of our much broader, long-term species-level survival instincts.

There is a profound and paradoxical relationship between our individual survival strategies and our equally sophisticated species survival strategies, many of which (love, compassion, forgiveness, humility) we instinctively manifest through our capacity for faith. Again, this paradox is a conflict of the narrower survival context of reason confronting a wider context of reality than it can symbolize. Our collective instincts deal with the widest possible context of the organism's behavior. Species aspire to evolve and survive *forever*. The wider context seems contradictory to our reason in that collective survival interests like sharing limited resources and care and protection of unrelated offspring, are often in conflict with much simpler individual survival rationales of eating and procreating.

The wider truth is that species-level survival traits are expressed in our behavior by a neurological system that is naturally selected by real world forces well beyond the scope of our modern rational context. While our reason might not always be able to symbolize it in terms of our individual survival, being “good” is the individual being paradoxically self-disinterested in promotion of our species' interests. Being evil is the individual being rationally self-interested to the detriment of our species' interests. It is only the subjugation of our reason to a more powerful, potentially irrational *feeling* (instinct) of survival “correctness” that has historically allowed our faith in good and evil to be selected as a species-level survival trait. Our faith in God can be seen as a non-rational, naturally selected survival instinct which provides real world, species-wide survival context beyond the limited powers of our reason alone.